This listing of claims will replace all prior versions of claims in the application.

Claims 1-31. (cancelled)

Claim 32. (currently amended) A method of forming a positive photoresist relief image, comprising:

(a) applying a coating layer of a photoresist composition on a substrate,

the photoresist composition comprising a photoactive component and a resin component that comprises a polymer that at least substantially free of aromatic groups and comprises 1) a photoacid-labile ester group that has an alicyclic moiety, and 2) a nitrile group; and

(b) exposing ~~the photoresist composition layer to patterned radiation~~ and developing the exposed photoresist layer to yield a relief image.

Claim 33. (previously presented)The method of claim 32 wherein the polymer further comprises a lactone group.

Claim 34. (previously presented)The method of claim 32 wherein the photoresist layer is exposed to radiation having a wavelength of less than 200 nm.

Claim 35. (previously presented)The method of claim 32 wherein the photoresist layer is exposed to radiation having a wavelength of about 193 nm.

Claim 36. (previously presented)The method of claim 32 wherein the alicyclic moiety is a bicyclic group.

Claim 37. (previously presented)The method of claim 32 wherein the alicyclic moiety is a tricyclic group.

Claim 38. (previously presented)The method of claim 32 wherein after development the substrate is processed in areas bared of photoresist.

Claim 39. (currently amended) A method of forming a positive photoresist relief image, comprising:

(a) applying a coating layer of a photoresist composition on a substrate,

the photoresist composition comprising a photoactive component and a resin component that comprises a polymer that at least substantially free of aromatic groups and comprises 1) a photoacid-labile ester group that has an alicyclic moiety, the ester group present in an amount of from about 30 to 60 mole percent based on total units of the polymer, and 2) a nitrile group present in an amount of from about 20 to 50 mole percent based on total units of the polymer; and

(b) exposing the photoresist composition layer to patterned radiation and developing the exposed photoresist layer to yield a relief image.

Claim 40. (previously presented)The method of claim 39 wherein the polymer further comprises a lactone group.

Claim 41. (previously presented)The method of claim 39 wherein the photoresist layer is exposed to radiation having a wavelength of less than 200 nm.

Claim 42. (previously presented)The method of claim 39 wherein the photoresist layer is exposed to radiation having a wavelength of about 193 nm.

Claim 43. (previously presented)The method of claim 39 wherein the alicyclic moiety is a bicyclic group.

Claim 44. (previously presented)The method of claim 39 wherein the alicyclic moiety is a tricyclic group.

Claim 45. (previously presented)The method of claim 39 wherein after development the substrate is processed in areas bared of photoresist.

Claim 46. (new) The method of claim 32 wherein the alicyclic moiety is an optionally substituted alkyl adamantly.

Claim 47. (new) The method of claim 39 wherein the alicyclic moiety is an optionally substituted alkyl adamantly.